

In the claims:

Please replace claims 1-3, 5-7, and 9-12, delete claims 8 and 29-49, and add claims 50 and 51, all as shown below.

1. (Currently Amended): A system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes, comprising:
a first plate ~~having at least one adjustable grip adapted for gripping a spinous process;~~
a first grip associated with the first plate; and
a second plate connected with the first plate, ~~the second plate having at least one adjustable grip adapted for gripping a spinous process;~~
a second grip associated with the second plate;
~~at least one a spacer moveably rotatably~~ connected between the plates, the ~~at least one~~ spacer adapted to be positioned between adjacent spinous processes;
wherein the first grip and the second grip are adapted to frictionally contact opposite sides of one of the adjacent spinous process;
wherein the spacer is rotatable in order to adjust the orientation of the spacer relative to the spinous processes.
2. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one adjustable first grip and the second grip are~~ is adapted to be adjusted relative to the spinous process such that ~~a grip the first grip and the second grip are movable toward or away from the spinous process can be tightened or loosened.~~
3. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 2, wherein the ~~the at least one adjustable first grip and the second grip include~~ includes one of a bolt and a slotted screw for adjusting the ~~at least one adjustable first grip and the second grip.~~
4. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1, wherein the spacer can be expanded.
5. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ spacer is substantially elliptical in cross-section.
6. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1,

wherein the ~~at least one~~ spacer is adapted to be positioned close to a spine and adjacent to portions of the spinous processes to spread the load placed upon the at least one spacer by the adjacent spinous processes.

7. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1, wherein the ~~at least one~~ spacer is movably attached to the system so that the ~~at least one~~ spacer can attach at two or more locations on the system.

8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim ~~[[8]]~~ 51, wherein the first plate includes ~~at least one~~ a slot for positioning a first end of the ~~at least one~~ pin and the second plate includes ~~at least one~~ a slot for positioning a second end of the ~~at least one~~ pin such that the position of the ~~at least one~~ pin ~~can be adjusted~~ is adjustable relative to the first plate and the second plate.

10. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 9, wherein the ~~at least one~~ slot includes a plurality of lobes for positioning a pin such that the pin does not slip within the ~~at least one~~ slot.

11. (Currently Amended): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 9, wherein knurls surrounding the ~~at least one~~ slot prevent a pin from slipping within the ~~at least one~~ slot.

12. (Currently Amended): A system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes, comprising:
a first plate;
a second plate connected with the first plate by at least one pin; and
at least one clamp adapted to grip a spinous process, the at least one clamp including:
a first grip connected with the first plate, the first grip adapted to be positioned in contact with a first side of the spinous process; and
a second grip connected with the second plate, the second grip adapted to be positioned in contact with a second side of the spinous process;
wherein the at least one clamp is adapted to frictionally contact the adjacent spinous process; and
a spacer ~~movably connected with~~ rotatably mounted on the at least one pin, the spacer adapted to be positioned between spinous processes.

13. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 12, wherein a position of the at least one pin can be adjusted along a portion of the length of the first and second plates.
14. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 13, wherein the portion of the length of the first and second plates is defined by a length of at least one slot.
15. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 14, wherein the at least one slot includes a plurality of one of cut-outs, lobes, and scallops such that a pin can be positioned to prevent the pin from slipping within the at least one slot.
16. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 14, including knurls associated with at least one slot to prevent the pin from slipping within the at least one slot.
17. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 12, wherein the at least one spacer is substantially elliptical in cross-section.
18. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 12, wherein the at least one spacer is adapted to be positioned close to a spine and adjacent to portions of the spinous processes to spread the load placed upon the at least one spacer by the adjacent spinous processes.
19. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 17, wherein the at least one spacer is movably attached to the system so that the at least one spacer can attach at two or more locations on the system.
20. (Original): A system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes, comprising:
a first plate having:
a first adjustable grip adapted for gripping a first spinous process;
a second adjustable grip adapted for gripping a second spinous process;
a first slot at a first position;
a second slot at a second position; and
a third slot at a third position;
a second plate having:
a first adjustable grip adapted for gripping the first spinous process; and

a second adjustable grip adapted for gripping the second spinous process;
a first slot at a first position;
a second slot at a second position; and
a third slot at a third position;

a first pin positioned in the first slot of the first plate and the first slot of the second plate, thereby connecting the first plate with the second plate;

a second pin positioned in the second slot of the first plate and the second slot of the second plate, thereby connecting the first plate with the second plate;

a third pin positioned in the third slot of the first plate and the third slot of the second plate, thereby connecting the first plate with the second plate;

a first spacer moveably connected with the first pin;

a second spacer moveably connected with the second pin; and

a third spacer moveably connected with the third pin.

21. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein each of the adjustable grips is adapted to be adjusted relative to the spinous process so as to be tightened relative to the spinous processes.

22. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 21, wherein each of the adjustable grips includes one of a bolt and a slotted screw to adjust the adjustable grip.

23. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein at least one of the first, second and third spacers can be expanded.

24. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein each of the first, second, and third spacers is substantially elliptical in cross-section.

25. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein each of the first, second, and third spacers is adapted to be positioned close to a spine and adjacent to portions of the spinous processes to spread the load placed upon the spacer by the adjacent spinous processes.

26. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein

each of the first, second, and third spacers is movably attached to the system so that the spacer can be attached at two or more locations on the system.

27. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein each of the first, second, and third slots in the first plate and the second plate includes a plurality of cut-outs, lobes, or scallops such that pins can be positioned to prevent the pins from slipping within the slots.

28. (Original): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein knurls are associated with each of the first, second, and third slots in the first plate and the second plate prevent the pins from slipping within the slot.

29.-49. (Canceled)

50. (New): The system of for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 20, wherein:
the first spacer is rotatably mounted on the first pin;
the second spacer is rotatably mounted on the second pin; and
the third spacer is rotatably mounted on the third pin.

51. (New): The system for immobilizing adjacent spinous processes of claim 1, further comprising a pin connecting the plates and the spacer rotatably mounted on said pin.